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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
Washington 25, D. C.

AMS INSTRUCTION No. 223-6

ACTION BY: All Divisions and Offices in
Washington, D. C.

Certified Mail Service - Washington

I PURPOSE

This Instruction informs Washington offices of the desirability of using the certified mail service where practicable in lieu of the registered mail service, and outlines procedure for using the certified mail service.

II DESCRIPTION OF CERTIFIED MAIL SERVICE

A Coverage. Under recent legislation, the free registration service for Departmental offices in Washington, D. C., has been discontinued. However, the certified mail service provides, for domestic use, a service similar to but more economical than the registered mail service for first-class letter mail (including airmail) having no intrinsic (monetary or appraised) value. This includes articles of nonnegotiable character, and material the duplication of which would involve a cost if it were lost or destroyed.

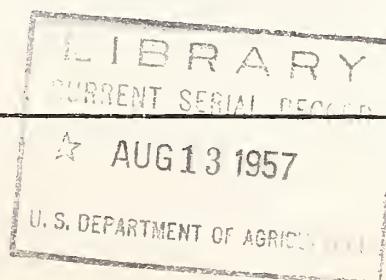
B Receipts. The certified mail service provides the sender with a receipt of mailing, and the destination post office with a record of delivery. A return delivery receipt, signed by the addressee, may be obtained upon payment of the required fee.

C Fees. The charges for certified mail are as follows:

	<u>Cents</u>
Fee (in addition to postage).....	15
Return receipts (in addition to fee)	
Showing to whom and when delivered.....	7
Showing to whom, when, and address to which delivered.....	31
Restricted Delivery.....	20
Inquiry fee (in addition to above fees)....	10

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III DETERMINATION OF SERVICE TO BE USED

As the use of the certified mail service in lieu of registered mail service usually results in a saving of 25 cents a letter, divisions and offices should, wherever practicable, adopt the more economical certified mail service. In determining whether to send a particular letter by certified or registered mail, the sender should take into consideration the relative merits of the two services. Factors which should enter into the decision include the following:

A Minimum Registration Fee. The minimum registration fee for registered mail is 40 cents, as compared to the certified mail fee of 15 cents.

B Records and Safeguards.

1 Registered Mail. For registered mail, records are kept by the post office from which such mail is sent, by intermediary handlers, and by the post office of address (destination post office); and special safeguards en route are provided as required.

2 Certified Mail. Certified mail is handled with the ordinary first-class mail. A record is made at the destination post office and is retained there for six months after a letter has been delivered.

C Types of Mail To Be Certified. Certified mail service is particularly adapted to letters or documents having no intrinsic value where for legal or other reasons a receipt showing date of mailing and/or a receipt signed by the addressee is required. It is also adapted where proof of delivery without return receipt is not required beyond the six-month retention period.

D Delivery. Delivery procedures for certified mail are very much like those for registered mail. Mail for delivery by carrier is taken by the carrier on his first trip after it is received at the post office. The carrier leaves a notice of arrival if for any reason he cannot deliver a certified letter, and returns the letter to the post office. If the letter is not called for by the addressee within the time specified by the sender, or within 15 days if no time is specified, it is returned to the sender. The post office destroys the delivery record at the end of six months.

IV PROCEDURE FOR USING CERTIFIED MAIL SERVICE

A When using the certified mail service, divisions shall:

(IV A)

- 1 Seal the envelope containing such mail.
- 2 Affix a prenumbered coupon from POD Form 3800 to the outgoing envelope.
- 3 If a return receipt is required:
 - (a) Indicate this fact on the face of the envelope, and
 - (b) Fill in a return receipt card (POD Form 3811) and forward it, with the envelope, to the AMS Mail Unit.
- 4 If restricted delivery is required indicate on the face of the envelope "Deliver to Addressee Only".

B The AMS Mail Unit will:

- 1 Furnish divisions with supplies of prenumbered blocks of POD Form 3800, Receipt for Certified Mail, and POD Form 3811, return receipt card.
- 2 Prepare the necessary Form AD-19, Mail Order, for each piece of certified mail, and record the charges for payment.
- 3 Maintain a central certified-mail record book for all outgoing certified mail, and handle inquiries regarding such mail when necessary.

V INQUIRIES

Inquiries concerning possible nondelivery of certified letters should be directed to the AMS Mail Unit for tracing.


Henry G. Herrell

Assistant Administrator for Management



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